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### Friday, September 1, 2006

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# **State seizes baby from Ricky's birth mom Infant is woman's fifth child taken by officials; one was boy adoptive parents allegedly killed.**

Karen Bouffard / The Detroit News

Friday, September 01, 2006



Ricky Holland

For a few joyous hours Wednesday, Casey Jo Caswell -- the birth mother of murdered 7-year-old Ricky Holland -- thought she would get another chance to raise a child.

But 11 hours after giving birth at Lansing's Ingham Regional Medical Center, state Department of Human Services took custody of the child and forbid Casey and her husband, Matt Caswell, from having contact with the 8-pound, 11 1/2 ounce girl named Alexia Jordan.

"She's devastated," Matt Caswell said.

"The baby's in the nursery, and she's not able to get any breast milk from her mother."

It's the fifth baby for Caswell, 25. The state took custody of the other four, including Ricky, and eventually allowed Tim and Lisa Holland to adopt them.

They both face trial in Ingham County Circuit Court for the murder of the boy reported missing July 2, 2005, and found in a swamp in January.

Both blame the other for the death. Lisa Holland's trial starts Sept. 11, while Tim's is scheduled for January.

Ricky's siblings are now in the custody of Tim Holland's relatives.

By law, the state must immediately file a petition to terminate the rights of parents who previously had children taken away and parental rights terminated, if there's evidence that another baby would be harmed, said Steve Yager, director of the state Office of the Family Advocate.

Ricky was 3 years old when a Jackson Circuit Court Judge terminated his birth mother's parental rights, citing longstanding homelessness and unemployment.

In 2005, she married longtime friend Matt Caswell, who pleaded no contest in 2003 to second-degree criminal sexual conduct involving a 3-year-old girl. He claims he was framed and is innocent.

You can reach Karen Bouffard at (734) 462-2206 or [kbouffard@detnews.com](mailto:kbouffard@detnews.com).

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## Man Caught In Sting, Thought He Was Meeting 14 year-Old

Aug 31, 2006 01:18 PM EDT

(TV5) -- He thought he was meeting a teenage girl for a sexual tryst but the people waiting for him in the Essexville parking lot had other plans.

When 27-year-old Michael Heart pulled into the Kroger parking lot he was expecting a 14-year old girl whom he talked to online for a month. Instead four special agents took him into Custody.

He had been talking to a state attorney's office agent for a month before the rendezvous was set up. He was arraigned August 30<sup>th</sup> on two felony charges: child sexual abuse with a computer and internet activity with communication with a minor for sexual purposes.



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09/01/2006

***News in brief***

## **Health clinic nabs \$28,000 grant**

**FROM STAFF REPORTS**

TRAVERSE CITY — The Community Health Clinic won a \$28,000 grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield and Blue Care Network of Michigan.

The clinic is located at 3147 Logan Valley Road in Traverse City and serves uninsured patients with earnings at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level. The grant will help the clinic, which is staffed by volunteer health professionals, serve a growing patient population requiring more services.

For information about the clinic, call 935-0668.

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# THE BAY CITY TIMES

## Day-care operator's license suspended

Friday, September 01, 2006

By JEREMY GONSIOR

TIMES WRITER

A local day care provider's license was suspended Monday after an investigation by the Michigan Department of Human Services.

Kimberly Anthony, who operates a group day care home at 1112 15th St., is confident she will return to business once she clears up a complaint filed by a parent.

"It's not true," she said on Wednesday, declining to give the specifics of the complaint. "The state's just doing what they have to do but the accusations are just false."

An Aug. 25 complaint investigation discovered violations of the Child Care Organizations Act and administrative rules related to supervision, assistant caregivers, and the child care home family, according to a press release. The Office of Children and Adult Licensing took action to "protect the health, welfare, and safety of children."

Anthony runs the group day care out of her two-story home, with a basement approved for care, according to her 2004 licensing report. It also states her "staffing plan was reviewed and approved."

For now, Anthony must inform parents who use the day care that she cannot operate it at this time.

Maureen Sorbet, DHS spokeswoman, said Anthony's next step is to meet with an administrative judge in Lansing within the next 30 days.

"They are given an opportunity to have a hearing and present their case," she said, also declining to offer any details about the complaint.

Anthony said she has plenty of people who will support her through this "misunderstanding."

"I have got five or six clients that are going to go to my hearing for me and two are going to write a letter of recommendation," she said.

- Jeremy Gonsior is a staff writer for The Times. He can be reached at 894-9647 or by e-mail at [jgonsior@bc-times.com](mailto:jgonsior@bc-times.com).

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# Census: County poverty level up

Nick Schirripa  
*The Battle Creek Enquirer*

While Calhoun County is experiencing the same economic trends as the rest of the nation, census data indicates the county is suffering larger drops in buying power and increases in poverty.

Calhoun County, from 1999 to 2005, experienced an almost 10 percent drop in median family incomes (after they were adjusted for inflation) and a 12 percent drop in median household incomes, contrasted with the national 5 percent and 6 percent changes, respectively. While county residents' incomes technically increased over the five-year period, they didn't keep pace with inflation.

Also in Calhoun County, the number of people living below the poverty level increased about 3 percentage points to 14.2 percent, and families living below the poverty level increased 3 percentage points to 11.1 percent.

Nationally, there was an increase of about 1 percentage point in each category, putting 13.3 percent of Americans and 10.2 percent of families living below the poverty level.

Based on the Census Bureau's poverty threshold from 2005, a family of four is considered in poverty if income is less than \$19,806.

Elaine Hunsicker, executive director of the Haven of Rest, said the 38-bed homeless shelter has seen an increased population in the past couple years.

Hunsicker said she also is seeing more unemployed men who are taking longer to find jobs, and the part-time, minimum-wage jobs that are available aren't much help.

"Our folks who don't have a high school education or a solid work history are having a lot of trouble finding jobs, especially the younger folks," she said.

Dan Salerno, fund development director for the Food Bank of South Central Michigan, said the new data released this week by the U.S. Census Bureau illustrates what the Food Bank already knows.

"This isn't great news. People are still struggling to make ends meet," he said. "People need to keep in mind, in our eight-county service area, Calhoun County has one of the highest rates of poverty and the highest rate of kids who are hungry."

The Food Bank also serves Barry, Branch, Hillsdale, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lenawee and

St. Joseph counties.

In 2005, about 11.6 percent of Calhoun County residents were living below the poverty line, according to the Food Bank, which was the second highest rate of the eight counties.

The other counties ranged between 7.3 percent and 12 percent, with Barry County at the bottom of the range and Kalamazoo County at the top.

Meanwhile, Salerno said, the Food Bank is delivering more food. About 3.2 million pounds of food have been delivered so far this year, about 2 percent more than was delivered by the same time in 2005.

The poverty rate, or the percentage of people living below the poverty line, plays a role in shaping the health of the national economy.

Federal officials indicated a steady poverty rate paired with a rising median household income could represent an increasing gap between the wealthy and the poor.

George Erickcek, a senior regional analyst with the Kalamazoo-based W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, said Calhoun County is showing more stability in the manufacturing sector compared to national trends, but overall, the county has slower job growth.

Manufacturing employment has dropped about 5 percent over the past six years in Calhoun County, Erickcek said, compared to a 17.4 percent drop nationwide.

Erickcek said as of June, total employment in Calhoun County is up 0.2 percent in past six years while the United States has seen a 2.6 percent gain.

"The good news is how well Calhoun County has held its own in manufacturing," he said. "The bad news is it hasn't been able to pick up the service jobs in health care or the business sectors."

Recent high school grads and other lower-skilled workers are having a hard time finding manufacturing jobs, he said, and are likely facing lower-wage jobs in other business sectors, such as retail or service, which could account for the decreases in income.

Steffany Swift, 18, is a 2006 graduate of Battle Creek Central High School, and with some help from her mother, she is working part-time as a baby sitter to pay for classes at Kellogg Community College.

Swift said she has looked for a full-time job to no avail.

"A lot of my friends are having trouble finding jobs, too," she said. "It seems like a lot of the jobs around here don't want young people to have jobs. It seems like they want older



people."

Employers may be looking for job candidates with a more solid work history, Swift said, but she also believes young people are undervalued by employers.

Erickcek said that lag in service and technology industry jobs is a common trait among small cities, which are having a hard time attracting professionals to grow the service business sector.

On a national scale, the poverty rate remained relatively unchanged in 2005, the first year it hasn't increased since before President Bush took office. The last drop in the poverty rate was in 2000, during the Clinton administration, when it dropped to 11.3 percent.

About 2 million nonfarm jobs were added nationwide in 2005 and nearly a million more since, but Ohio, Michigan and Illinois had fewer jobs in July than when Bush took office.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report. Nick Schirripa covers Calhoun County and Marshall. He can be reached at 966-0692 or [nschirrip@battlecr.gannett.com](mailto:nschirrip@battlecr.gannett.com).*



## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### Livingston County at top of the money pile

Residents rank 1st in state with median family income of \$71,546

Friday, September 01, 2006

**BY TRACY DAVIS,**

**News Staff Reporters**

Livingston County has the state's highest median household income - at \$71,546 - and the lowest poverty rate, according to data released earlier this week from the Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey. The survey includes counties with populations of 65,000 and over.

Michigan's median income was reported at \$46,039. The median household income in Washtenaw County was \$53,495

"The key is Livingston County has a relatively healthy, solid middle class, whereas Oakland has pockets of poverty, and the range of income is much wider," said Livingston County Administrator Bob Block. "As long as (Livingston) County maintains a quality school system and a low crime rate, and people feel safe, you're still going to see (growth)."

While Livingston County fared better than other Michigan communities, the county was not spared the trend of lagging median household incomes.

Incomes in Livingston County as well as nearby Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County fell behind what they were for inflation-adjusted Census 2000 figures. That is consistent with the trend for the state of Michigan as a whole and the nation.

Census Bureau officials and demographers caution against drawing too many conclusions by comparing Census 2000 data to the American Community Survey 2005 data, because, due to the survey methodology and sampling size, margins of error can be vast with smaller populations. But even when the margin of error is considered Livingston and Washtenaw households lost income ground, the data show.

The trend was true nationwide. U.S. incomes for 2005 were 5.9 percent less than inflation-adjusted 1999 incomes. Statewide, the gap was 12 percent; in Livingston, 9.4 percent.

"That's quite different than what happened in the rest of the country, but that's consistent with the fact that we have lost 100,000-plus jobs" in Michigan, said Jim Rogers, data manager for the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

Poverty levels in Livingston and Washtenaw counties were below the statewide level of 6.6 percent. Livingston's percentage of families living in poverty was 2.2 percent and Washtenaw County had a rate of 4.61 percent.

Because of the smaller sampling size for families living in poverty, the margins of error for those rates at the local level were much higher and incomparable to 2000 data. The poverty rate for the state was 7.4 percent in Census 2000.

Rebecca Blank, dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, said the economic expansion of the past several years has disproportionately helped the wealthy and left the poor

unaffected.

In earlier economic expansions in the 1960s and 1990s, she said, the poverty rate fell significantly, but it hasn't this time.

"We are one of the few states that isn't showing substantial economic growth at this point in the expansion. The result is that the poverty rate in the whole state of Michigan is up higher than we'd like to be," Blank said. "What I find most striking here is that you have very strong aggregate growth across the country. But in Michigan, poverty didn't increase this year, but it didn't go down either. A much greater degree of the growth is benefiting higher-income families."

The survey data also shows that in some categories, Michigan fared better than other states. Average earnings for full-time workers were higher than the national average, state demographer Ken Darga said. Earnings for full-time male workers were seventh in the nation, he said.

Although the number of people in the labor force is lower than other Great Lakes states, Darga credited Michigan's continued strong manufacturing segment for those numbers. Michigan ranks second nationwide for the number of people in the manufacturing sector.

Dana Johnson, chief economist for Comerica Bank, said the data show Michigan firmly in the middle of the nation in terms of incomes and poverty.

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## County's nonprofit groups pose issues

Friday, September 01, 2006

Were we interested in reducing a serious matter to a frivolous question, we could frame it like this: Does Jackson have too many do-gooders? No. But the question deserves more than a quick come-back; it raises a serious issue -- Jackson's large number of nonprofit groups.

According to the Jackson Nonprofit Support Center, there are 600 nonprofit groups in Jackson County.

What is a nonprofit? Generally, it can be any organization whose purpose is to support an issue or matter of private interest or public concern for non-commercial purposes.

Typical of elsewhere, Jackson County's nonprofit groups fall into many categories -- arts, education, foundations, government, health, human services, religious, service clubs, volunteer centers. Not every nonprofit organization has tax-exempt status; that must be sought from the Internal Revenue Service.

Specific nonprofits range from the small, such as the year-old Together We Can Make a Difference, with its shoestring budget of \$47 a day, to the large Community Action Agency, with a \$17 million annual budget.

Is 600 nonprofits for this community too many? By one measure -- the national average -- it isn't. About 3 million nonprofits serve a population of 300 million nationally. In Jackson County, there is about one nonprofit for every 275 people, while nationally it is one nonprofit per 100 people.

Moreover, Jackson County's nonprofits include a diverse array of organizations, including scores of churches and other ministries, township governments, school districts, mental-health agencies such as LifeWays and Segue, a nonprofit real-estate brokerage, the Michigan Shakespeare Festival, MSU Extension, Spring Arbor University and Baker College.

However, with so many nonprofits operating, there is bound to be overlap. That national concern is getting attention in Congress. Some lawmakers, alerted by problems that surfaced following Hurricane Katrina, want a sweeping review of nonprofits and how they raise funds. For nonprofits with tax-exempt status, what is it they do that merits charitable status? Should nonprofits that duplicate efforts already under way be allowed to get or maintain charity status?

Such issues deserve attention. Locally, we would like to see more consolidation of effort within the nonprofit community. To some extent, that has happened. The Nonprofit Support Center is an excellent resource, especially for its 200 or so member nonprofits. An example of consolidation is seen in the fusion of Breakout Drug Education with Family Service & Children's Aid. Such common-cause consolidations are in the public interest.

Also, there are so many groups raising funds for so many good causes -- how is a donor to determine the credibility of each?

And is survival in the marketplace to be the only means of separating the effective from the ineffective?

True enough -- you can never have too many people engaged in charitable work. But you can have too much organization, too much redundancy, too much fund-raising.



## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### State shouldn't meddle with private foundations

Friday, September 1, 2006

Without private philanthropic foundations, many good works that keep communities whole would not be done.

In Michigan, where the state government's budget has been shrinking at the same time Michigan residents are getting gradually poorer, the role of private foundations has become more important than ever.

At first glance, proposed state legislation to force foundations in the state to direct at least half their philanthropic giving to Michigan causes may seem like a good idea.

It's not.

Government has no business

micromanaging where private donations must be spent. Foundations should always adhere as closely as possible to the intent of their donors. But this bill, co-sponsored by state Rep. William Huizenga, R-Zeeland, and state Rep. Andy Dillon, D-Redford, would wrench from foundations a great deal of the flexibility they need to meet emerging needs.

The bill is a response to action by Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox, who has been investigating the Ford Foundation, based in New York, which gives fairly few grants to Michigan-related causes.

But this legislation could result in fewer foundations willing to charter themselves in Michigan and fewer donors willing to make contributions to Michigan-based foundations.

According to The Detroit News, none of Michigan's biggest foundations -- Kellogg, Kresge and Charles Stewart Mott -- distribute half or more of their charitable giving in Michigan.

William S. White, president of the Mott Foundation, was quoted in the Chronicle of Philanthropy as saying the bill would have a "chilling effect on the development of further foundations in the state of Michigan." White said those who drafted the bill "probably don't know much about how foundations work."

Because the Kalamazoo Community Foundation is designated a community foundation, the majority of its grants are made within Kalamazoo County.

There are so many problems the state Legislature should be working to fix -- finding replacement revenue for the Single Business Tax that it recently killed, improving education, attracting jobs -- that it doesn't need to waste its time trying to micromanage private philanthropic institutions.

House Bill 6153 should be filed away and not allowed to see the light of day.

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Published September 1, 2006

## 2 free preschool programs canceled

Local agency loses its funding;  
more than 100 kids out of luck

By Nicole Geary  
Lansing State Journal

Single mom Stefanie Badgley felt secure this summer knowing her daughter was enrolled in free preschool with busing.

Now, with just days before school begins, she's scrambling to decide how 4-year-old Dennie Rae will spend the year preparing for kindergarten.

Child Abuse Prevention Services, a local nonprofit organization that educates more than 100 preschool kids each year, unexpectedly lost the state grant it has depended on for 21 years.

The first group of 3- and 4-year-olds were set to start class Tuesday; the news came Aug. 25.

"She has a backpack, all new school clothes. My first thought was, what am I going to tell this child?" Badgley said. "But I will do whatever I have to to see that she goes."

She found a free opening in the area without busing that could work, but most of the affected families are still struggling to find options or scrape up tuition.

Child Abuse Prevention Services, or CAPS, had to shut down two full preschool classes at Lansing-area churches, leaving 10 staff members without jobs. The agency also expected to cover costs for 36 low-income or at-risk kids enrolled in MSU's Child Development Laboratories in East Lansing and Haslett.

"We're just dumbfounded, devastated," said Executive Director Julie Allen, noting the organization met all requirements of the \$350,000-a-year grant. "Having been a well-established program ... it doesn't make sense to me."

State education department officials said there wasn't enough money to accept seven of 47

### Local preschool options

These programs may still have classroom space available or will keep waiting lists, depending on eligibility:

- Capital Area Community Services, Head Start: 482-1504 or [www.cacsheadstart.org](http://www.cacsheadstart.org)
- Lansing School District: 325-6242 or <http://preschools.lansingschools.net>
- The Ingham County Office for Young Children also can help point families to the area's free or tuition-based programs: 887-4319 or [www.ingham.org/HD/OYC](http://www.ingham.org/HD/OYC)

applicants for this year's competitive Michigan School Readiness Program. Consultant Judy Levine said applications are scored and ranked based on factors such as geographical need.

Although demand continues to increase, she said this year's allocation for the program remained flat, at \$12.25 million.

Leaders of two smaller Lansing programs that maintained their grants - Lansing Community College and the Oak Park YMCA - are reaching out to CAPS but they simply don't have room for all the affected children.

Child Abuse Prevention Services has offered the area's largest free kindergarten readiness program outside public school districts, which are funded separately. It also links families with counseling, clothing vouchers and other resources.

Spaces remain in the area's Head Start preschools, but few of the displaced families meet the program's lower income threshold.

"They rely on us," Allen said of her clients. "We have had a lot of tears."

After learning about the last-minute change, Chrystal Williams-Holbrook tried to enroll her son in one of Lansing School District's free preschools - an option she considered months ago - but she could only get on a waiting list.

"I was very irritated," she said. "A week before school starts? That just inconveniences so many people."

There's not much room in the household budget, with seven children in the family, but she doesn't want Tracy to fall behind before kindergarten.

So she's resorting to paying tuition at the MSU Childhood Development Laboratory in East Lansing. Coordinators there have offered a \$500 discount to ease the burden.

"We don't know at this point which families are able to scrape together the \$2,000," said Supervisor Laura Stein. "Already a few called and said they must withdraw."

Contact Nicole Geary at 377-1066 or [ngeary@lsj.com](mailto:ngeary@lsj.com).

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## School board's newest member wants parents involved

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, August 31, 2006

By Laura Misjak

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FLINT - A former corrections officer who said she hopes to increase parental involvement and academic excellence is the newest addition to the Flint Board of Education.

After four rounds of voting Wednesday night, Tracey Fountain, 37, beat seven other contenders for the board seat that Lisa Walker vacated earlier this month.

At Ypsilanti's Huron Valley Center, the psychiatric unit of the Huron Valley state prison, Fountain said she has seen what absent parents and poor educational infrastructures can do. A lack of academic opportunities and little support from the community foster behavior that lands kids in correctional institutions, she said.

"There needs to be an intervention of our youth," she said, "and it starts with community activities and establishing familial support for them."

Fountain, who has a son and daughter in the school system, is a manager with the state's Department of Human Services. She is a graduate of Northern High School and holds a bachelor and master's degree from the University of Michigan-Flint.

Board President Stephanie Robb-Martin said Fountain's DHS experience and her eight years as a corrections officer will add an important perspective to the board.

"She will complement this board and strengthen us," Robb-Martin said. "As a corrections officer, she's aware of so many of the issues that young people face."

Fountain said Flint students don't have to be the victims of unequal educational opportunities, and the community should embrace School Superintendent Walter Milton Jr.'s reform plan, which includes employing more facilitators to control truancy and building new facilities.

"I understand that people

aren't used to change, but our academic system has been behind other school systems', and we are still in need of change," she said. "This change is going to have a positive impact in (the students') lives in the near future. The old way has not worked for the majority of our students, and it's time that we commit to educational reform."

Robb-Martin said the selection of candidates for the position was outstanding, but the board's system of

### QUICK TAKE

Tracey Fountain

- AGE: 37
- EDUCATION: Graduate of Northern High School; bachelor's degree in sociology and master's degree in public administration from the University of Michigan-Flint
- OCCUPATION: Manager for state Department of Human Services
- FAMILY: Single, one son in eighth grade at Whittier Classical Academy, one daughter in kindergarten at Pierce Elementary School



interviewing needs to change. During Wednesday's interview, each candidate was asked eight designated questions, with each board member asking one question.

"We need a sounder process," said board Secretary Raymond Hatter. "This restricts us from asking follow-up questions."

Robb-Martin said a decision will be made within the next day for when Fountain can be officially sworn in. Fountain's term will expire in May 2007.

Other candidates were Eleazar D. Barzart, Loria A. Corder, Ryan M. Eashoo, David D. Halboth, the Rev. Larry Higgins, Adam Kurtz-Tipton and Carrie Younger-Nelson.

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Article published Aug 31, 2006

## **Many area agencies closed for Labor Day**

Most banks and governmental agencies will be closed Monday in observance of Labor Day.

**Banks** - All banks and credit unions will be closed Monday.

**Bus service** - Lake Erie Transit buses will not run Monday.

**Garbage pickup** - Trash will not be collected Monday; pickup will be delayed one day all next week. The Monroe Department of Public Services will be closed Monday.

**Government offices** - Dundee Township and the Monroe County Road Commission will be closed Friday and Monday. All other township, city and village offices, as well as the Monroe County Courthouse, Department of Human Services and Secretary of State branches, will be closed Monday.

**Grocery stores** - Sav-A-Lot will close at 5 p.m. Monday. Farmer Jack, Food Town, Kroger, Meijer and Busch's Valu Land, Carleton, will be open regular hours Monday.

**Libraries** - All branches of Monroe County Library System will be closed Monday. Milan Library and Flat Rock Public Library will be closed Sunday and Monday.

**Mail** - No mail, other than express packages, will be delivered Monday. The Monroe Post Office will be closed Monday, but the lobby will open at 6 a.m. for picking up box mail.

**Newspaper** - The Monroe Evening News will be delivered Monday morning. Evening News offices will be closed Monday.

**Other agencies** - The Monroe Family YMCA is closed through Monday. The United Way of Monroe County is closed Monday.

Retail stores - Frenchtown Square mall and Horizon Outlet Center will close at 6 p.m. Monday. Elder Beerman will close at 7 p.m. Monday. Kmart, Sears, Target and Wal-Mart will be open regular hours Monday.

Travel centers - The Travel Information Center for I-75 and US-23 will be open regular hours Labor Day weekend.

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